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COMMUNICATIONS

[The *School Review* welcomes communications touching upon personal aspects of school life. We are happy to publish the following sensible letter.]

WASAMSAW, TEXAS

December 10, 1915

To the Editor of the "School Review":

"Under him my genius is rebuked, as it is said Mark Antony's was by Caesar." How often true! Many of us cringe inwardly when in the presence of rich or distinguished men. A feeling of inferiority, coupled with chagrin, and perhaps a touch of resentment, stifles us. Our freedom from restraint which we feel among equals changes to a curious sense of oppression when we are among our superiors. Only the bigness of character possessed by a Benjamin Franklin stands unabashed in the presence of royalty.

A school officer often forgets this natural trait, or remembering it, inwardly exults in the prestige of his position, when dealing with subordinates. Not infrequently the rank and file of teachers are unduly humble in the presence of their superior officer; even worse, they perform every routine duty of their classroom with conscious terror of his disapproval. Sometimes this produces a high standard of efficiency in a school system; but more frequently it results in an unhappy, restless spirit of suspicion permeating the entire teaching force. A capable school superintendent has no pride of position. He has, to be sure, a sense of the responsibility of his position; he realizes that his supervisory powers are not perfunctory, but real; and that his subordinates must constantly be aware of his observation and attention. He demands efficiency. But with it all, a capable superintendent is more than a superior; he is a sympathetic friend with a cordial welcome and hearty handshake for his teachers; yes, even for his janitors. Indeed, a capable superintendent must go far more than half-way in making his teachers feel that while they are dependent upon his approbation, they are none the less fellow-workmen, each with a certain independence in his own sphere, co-operating with him for the good of the schools. Both teachers and supervising officer must remember the philosophy of the old saying, "A gentleman is a man who can shake hands with a king without feeling embarrassed, or shake hands with a coal-heaver without making him feel embarrassed."

Very truly yours,

JAMES MANLY